

# White Paper

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## Georgia State University Next Generation Humanities PhD White Paper

This past year our efforts to expand the career options for humanities PhDs received enthusiastic responses from administrators, faculty, and students, as well as local businesses and organizations. The following pages provide an overview of our accomplishments and what we learned, as well as the challenges we have faced. We look forward to continuing this important work made possible by our NEH-funded Planning Grant (see Appendix 1 for a list of committee participants).

### SECTION I. WHAT HAPPENED?

**1.1 Events:** In addition to the NEH Next Generation PhD Planning Grant, we also received a Career Diversity Grant from the American Historical Association (AHA), which together allowed us to fund a series of workshops focused on the wide variety of professional career paths available to humanities PhDs. The following are the main sponsored events we want to highlight:

- **September 20, 2016: AHA/NEH Alumni Networking Event:** Four alumni from PhD humanities programs at GSU and Emory University who have built successful careers outside the academy discussed how their education prepared them for their careers. They also spoke about proactive steps students and programs can take to prepare for a wide range of careers.
- **October 7, 2016: AHA/NEH Workshop on PhD Communication Skills:** Led by Alex Cummings, a GSU historian who runs the group blog *Tropics of Meta*, spoke on writing for broad public audiences through digital media, and Beverly Langford, who teaches writing at GSU's Robinson College of Business, led a workshop on business communication.
- **October 28, 2016: Nonacademic Work as "Plan A":** Lecture by Jim Grossman, Executive Director of the AHA. We discussed what we are doing when we educate humanists and identified priorities for institutional change, including training faculty to mentor students for work outside of academe.
- **November 9, 2016: Planning Committee Meeting:** Discussed strategies for building networks with Atlanta industries and how to track where our humanities PhDs find employment.
- **January 20, 2017: Quantitative Literacy Workshop with Sociology Professor Tomeka Davis:** Hosted a bootcamp on working with numbers and charts, covering the basics of statistical significance and deviations, reading graphs, understanding dependent and independent variables, correlation, and using statistics to make inferences.
- **February 10, 2017: Big Data Workshop with Sanjay Srivastava, Associate Dean for Strategy and Innovation at GSU's College of Business:** Offered a workshop on working with big data, covering the concepts of large-scale data analysis, and developing quantitative literacy (one of the five skill sets that the AHA has singled out as essential to career diversity).
- **February 15, 2017: Student Innovation Fellowship (SIF) Project Showcase:** Faculty, staff, students, and community and business leaders attended the event to learn about the innovative projects spearheaded by SIF fellows. Discussions included how to secure internal and external funding for these projects and Fellow positions, how to tie these projects to curricular changes, and how the university can support collaborative research-based models of humanist training.
- **April 14, 2017: Concluding Event:** We hosted a discussion among faculty and graduate students assessing the success of our workshops and considering future steps to take. Catherine Neiner, Director of GSU's Career Services office helped us brainstorm ways to help our students market themselves as potential employees in the private sector.

**1.2 Activities:** We also developed numerous complementary initiatives in departments, at the university level, and outside of academia that reflected and extended the goals of our events and meetings.

- **Department:** The Departments of English and History are committed to expanding post-degree opportunities for our PhDs through a more proactive and holistic approach to the graduate curriculum:
  - The Directors of Graduate Studies for English and History have expanded their duties and goals to promote diverse post-degree futures for new PhDs.
  - We are in the process of creating a Career Diversity Advisory Board of alumni to help guide and network our matriculating PhDs into the non-academic job market.
  - We conducted an extensive, multi-part survey over the course of the planning year to collect quantitative and qualitative data about how students perceived their non-academic job prospects and perceptions from both graduate students and faculty (see Appendix 4).
  - The Department of History has a long-standing internship program through their Master of Heritage Preservation degree track that fosters their graduates' pursuits in museum-based jobs that can serve as a model for English and other History tracks.
  - The Department of English approved a Graduate Internship course that can be substituted for required credits in any M.A. or Ph.D. program beginning in Fall 2017. The Department of History already had an internship course in the catalog, but the course description needs to be changed at the next opportunity (Fall 2017).
  - The Department of English approved paid professionalization hours for graduate students to work on specific projects with the Student Innovation Fellowship (SIF) program.
- **University:** Both the College of Arts & Sciences and the University, particularly the Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Programs, have been strong supporters of our work to promote career diversity.
  - Committed expansion of Career Services to assist graduate students on the job market
  - Helped secure continued funding of the Student Innovation Fellowship program, creating non-traditional assistantships for graduate students that involve collaborative, interdisciplinary, digital work
  - Dedicated assistance from College of Arts & Science Graduate Office to work with departments on setting up internships, with potential for a full time position in this area
  - Significant progress toward a Digital Humanities certificate program, to develop both soft and hard skills that are needed inside and outside academia
- **Connections to the greater community:** Our planning team successfully forged connections with a variety of external, Atlanta-based parties from the private, government, and nonprofit sectors (see Appendix 1 for a draft of a GSU Humanities Graduate Student Interns flyer, created with help from Atlanta Chamber of Commerce for local businesses and organizations). We met and established working relationships with representatives from:
  - the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
  - the City of Atlanta
  - the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - CARE, a global leader within a worldwide movement dedicated to ending poverty
  - SITA, a leading specialist in air transport communications and information technology
  - SKIGNZ, a company working in the field of augmented reality

## SECTION II. WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DIDN'T?

### 2.1 Successes and Accomplishments

- **Upcoming Changes to DGS Role:** Beginning in Fall 2017, the role of the Director of Graduate Studies in both English and History will evolve in keeping with our ongoing commitment to the initiatives launched during the Next Generation planning year. The DGS of both departments have agreed to make the Alumni Connections Workshop an annual event, and to assume responsibility for organizing other workshops on career development and professionalization throughout the academic year. Both departments have changed the responsibilities of the DGS to include tracking alumni, and will provide GRA funding in support of tracking efforts. The English department has also pledged to create a graduate administrative assistantship position, which will fund a student to assist the DGS in developing career diversity programming. The history department, which is continuing to work with the AHA's Career Diversity Initiative, intends to apply for funding for a Career Diversity Fellow for the 2019-2020 academic years, which would provide a similar level of support within the history department.
- **Connecting to GSU Career Services:** Until this year, the Career Services Office at GSU has been focused almost solely on helping undergraduate students. However, the new director of Career Services, Catherine Neiner, has previous experience working with graduate students and has been supportive of our work. She and her staff have met with the planning committee several times and have committed to expanding the resources their office provides to graduate students and to helping us build ties and internships with the Atlanta business community.
- **Career Diversity Advisory Board:** Based on the success of our alumni panel on September 20, 2016, our committee agreed to establish a special Career Diversity Advisory Board that will provide guidance and consult with Departments about our continued efforts to train our students to compete for jobs in growing and evolving fields such as user experience research, project management, and participatory design in Atlanta's booming media and technology industries. The board will consist of GSU alumni and other representatives from the private sector. The members will meet bi-annually.
- **Departmental Funding for Student Innovation Fellowship Program** (see Appendix 3 for additional information): PhD students on full funding in the Department of English are typically paid for about 100 hours of professionalization work each academic year, in addition to teaching. During the NEH planning year we worked toward expanding these professionalization opportunities and connect more students to the Student Innovation Fellowship Program (SIF). Beginning Fall 2017, the Department of English will allow PhD students to use their professionalization hours to work on SIF projects where they will work alongside SIF fellows on projects to acquire or hone skills and subject matter knowledge relevant to their career goals. By working on a SIF project, students will also gain experience collaborating on large-scale, public facing, digital scholarship, and build a portfolio of their contributions. For instance, a student might create a map layer or conduct usability research on ATLmaps. They might create an oral history project or learn 3D modeling software to recreate historic objects in a digital environment for Unpacking Manuel's. These and other projects have received grants and awards, as well as local, national, and international attention. This agreement with the Department of English is the first version of determining how to best connect more graduate students to the public digital scholarship supported by the SIF program. We hope to start using this as a model for other departments and for the practicum hours connected to the Digital Humanities certificate currently under development.

- **Changes to the humanities graduate curriculum:** Based on survey results, internships are the most frequently identified means of diversifying the professional development of humanities graduate students at GSU. The Department of History has a longstanding internship program through their Master of Heritage Preservation curriculum and has an internship course in its graduate catalog. This year the Department of English approved a Graduate Internship course that can be substituted for required credits in any M.A. or Ph.D. program beginning in Fall 2017. The aim of this course is to provide a structure through which students can apply concepts learned in the classroom to real-world situations in the workplace. As a result, we hope that this course—and the internships that develop out of it—will further our goal of promoting career diversity and providing means of graduate student support beyond traditional teaching and research assistantships.
- **Second AHA Career Diversity Grant:** The Department of History successfully applied for additional funding from the AHA for continued involvement in their Career Diversity Initiatives and is taking part in the Faculty Institutes. This continued funding and participation will allow us to learn from initiatives at other institutions.
- **Digital Humanities Certificate:** The College of Arts and Sciences is making progress toward creating a graduate certificate in Digital Humanities (DH), giving students the opportunity to develop technology skills applicable in a range of careers. The research conducted by the College of Arts and Sciences indicates that we cannot justify creating a master's degree program in DH due to the small sizes of existing degree programs, we feel confident we can build a convincing case for both the student demand and the market need for the technology skills and experiences that a DH certificate provides. We plan to require five classes for the certificate with the addition of possible practicum hours connecting the DH certificate to the Student Innovation Fellowship Program. Most classes would be housed in English and History, with other departments contributing as well, including Communication, Computer Science, Geosciences, and Anthropology. Only two courses would need to be created specifically for the certificate program: a dedicated intro to DH course and a capstone course. A committee comprised of four faculty members and one staff person has drafted a proposal for the certificate program. We anticipate submitting it for approval during the upcoming academic year.
- **Data collection** (see Appendix 4): The core committee conducted seven surveys of graduate faculty and students in the departments of History and English at GSU over the period of grant funding. These surveys were divided into three main groups: Group 1 attempted to gauge general attitudes about non-academic careers for doctoral students in the humanities prior to the majority of our grant-funded initiatives; Group 2 measured the perceived value and effectiveness of two specific events and workshops organized as part of our grant initiatives; and Group 3 sought to assess student and faculty attitudes to non-academic career professionalization at the end of the funding period. Detailed analysis and summary of the survey results are included in Appendix 4.

## 2.2 Challenges and Problems:

- Perceived culture of misunderstanding:** Despite the very encouraging success of our events, coupled with the exciting connections we have been able to forge both at GSU and outside the university, we still perceive a lack of comfort from faculty when it came to asking their help to make our graduate students more competitive for the non-academic job market. In the course of our research and based on survey results as well as discussion outcomes, there is a sense that even though faculty members are enthusiastic about the idea and vouch their support, most often they do not know how best to support it. While not intentional on their part, lack of information and unfamiliarity with regards to professional opportunities for humanists outside the university contribute to an environment in which related questions are not brought up and discussed in and out of the classroom. In addition, a number of graduate students expressed concerns about potential fallouts if they chose to pursue careers outside the academy. “Success” it turns out, is still very much defined by obtaining a tenure track position at an academic institution. We realized that as much as it is our goal to re-imagine the education of humanities PhDs via departmental and university-wide changes as well as forging connections with businesses and governmental entities, we also need to be more proactive in our outreach to confront established attitudes of those hesitant towards change.
- Scope and Focus:** Throughout this Next Generation planning year, our focus has been on the English and History PhD programs, but we have many other humanities programs that offer MA degrees. Through direct participation from faculty from other departments at our meetings and events, as well as informal conversations among faculty, we have realized how much we can learn from these other programs, and how they could benefit from the work we are doing. Consequently, we have come to believe that a more general focus on humanities graduate programs, and not just PhDs, could be beneficial. For example, Philosophy maintains a reading list about what to do with the MA degree and tracks their MA student placement in PhD programs, faculty positions, and non-academic careers. Religious Studies has an MA with a concentration in nonprofit management in collaboration with the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. World Languages and Cultures, Anthropology, Archaeology, and Communication all have clear professional possibilities for their grad students outside of academia. We would benefit from involvement from these other disciplines. After this planning year, we have also come to understand that we need to consider how our English and History departments have different strengths and weaknesses in how we offer opportunities for our graduate students. For example, English’s Rhetoric and Composition concentration has long had career diversity as a major focus and we need to consider how History and other English areas might benefit from their experience.
- Organizational Challenges and Unfinished Tasks:** While our initiatives have been enthusiastically supported for the most part, we have found that our administrative infrastructure was lacking. Our alumni are eager to help us work on expanding job possibilities for our current students, but we don’t have the communication lines to make it easy for them to help us. Businesses are interested in humanities grad student interns, but we don’t have clear official structures in place to make it happen. Our initial idea that we could quickly create internships has proven to be untrue. Organizing internships and moving those from mere idea to reality was more difficult and more time-consuming than anticipated. For example, we would have very much liked to see ties to the strong and vibrant Atlanta film industry, which would be highly beneficial especially for graduate students in the humanities who pursue a more creative curriculum. These ties still remain largely aspirational.

### SECTION III. WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

**Toward a counter-narrative of success:** Matriculating PhDs in the humanities find themselves in a relatively new, though much publicized, unprecedented position: the academic job market is so supersaturated with viable, eager candidates that post-degree chances of success in this market are, for most, simply unattainable. In this way, new PhDs enter a strange sort of inverted attrition. On one side, the academy, which will survive as it is bolstered by intellectual, cultural, economic, and national investments. On the other side, the seemingly endless waves of PhDs, most of whom will collapse under the perceived impossibility of “making it.”

The narrative of success is itself institutionalized, handed-down, even if unintentionally, from advisor to graduate student. The understanding is that if you don’t land a tenure-track job at a Research-1 or teaching school, then you’ve failed. Settling for a job outside academia is presumed to not only be an unfortunate substitute, but also to be divorced of the skills and expertise cultivated throughout one’s graduate studies (which of course is the real demoting embarrassment). It makes sense, then, that expanding one’s definition of success is high risk. After all, how else does one justify the numerous years, steep loans, and personal sacrifices made in the name of expertise? How does a newly minted PhD make it all “worth it?”

We contend that the real failure here is declining to see that when “success” is defined so narrowly it undermines the very intention and purpose of humanists. At heart, humanists have an obligation to people and communities, not the machinery of institutions. Humanists are charged with being both guardian and dissenter, advocate and critic, for and of society. Contrary to standard perception in academia, locating the viability of humanities PhDs solely in a university tenured position is not promoting intellectual rigor; it is crippling societal health. What’s more, this curbed success narrative is reciprocally detrimental: when humanists lose their purpose in society, their standing in academia deteriorates. This boomerang effect ultimately erodes the importance of the university itself.

Humanists are trained to locate and analyze social values. But values, and therefore the humanist position, can easily become codified and bureaucratized. As a non-elite institution, GSU is uniquely situated to be more adaptable and receptive to the changes we have committed ourselves to over our Planning Year. Our agenda for the Next Gen Humanities PhD carves new paths for career diversity, but we foreground this work in the belief that PhDs can and should initiate consistent querying of values outside academia if humanists are to remain a viable, even vital component of society.

**Missed Opportunities and the Importance of Outreach:** Humanities PhDs should not shy away from pursuing professional careers outside the academy. Their training is broad and diverse. They develop exceptional communication skills. They are able to familiarize themselves quickly and sustainably with new material and are trained to approach issues and problems from a holistic perspective. Moreover, the rigorous curriculum of PhD education teaches them project management, resilience, commitment, and independence. In many ways, humanities PhDs are trained to be jacks-of-all-trades, and in the current knowledge economy, businesses are more and more in need of the skillsets that humanities PhD can bring to the workplace. This demand came to light again and again in our meetings and extensive conversations with business representatives over the course of the funding period.

Yet, humanities PhDs seeking employment outside academia are confronted with numerous obstacles, and while some of these hurdles stem from large segments of the private sector hesitant to hire humanities PhDs, many problems that humanists face are self-inflicted. For one, humanists' access to finding work outside the academy is not systematic and homogeneous. It is individual and situational. Students cannot look to their peers for inspiration during the job search. In addition, departments and faculty members—albeit interested and enthusiastic about the prospect of giving students the opportunity to pursue non-traditional career paths—still lack familiarity as well as the resources. Given that there is high demand for the skillsets of humanities PhDs, the current situation is one that we believe is filled with missed opportunities. These missed opportunities emphasize the need for systemic transformation.

Our work over the course of the funding period was geared not only towards changing established mindsets but also to starting initiatives designed to equip humanities departments and the university with structures and the necessary resources to support humanists who are seeking employment outside academia. To be clear, the academic mindset and that of businesses are not the same; rather, they are complementary in that businesses often need skills fostered in humanities graduate programs and are enthusiastic about establishing connections. The hindrance of such connections often comes through the infrastructural and cultural limitations inside academia, which have made forging lasting relationships difficult. We address this impasse on multiple levels. On the departmental level, we have successfully laid the foundation for humanities PhDs to explore alternative careers through internships and professionalization assignments. Further, the Directors of Graduate Studies for English and History have expanded their duties and goals to promote non-academic post-degree futures for new PhDs. On the university level, we have forged connections with Career Services and we have made significant progress toward a Digital Humanities certificate program so that humanities students may develop both soft and hard skills that are needed inside and outside academia. Additionally, we are creating a Career Diversity Advisory Board that will provide guidance and consult departments on how to train our students to compete for jobs in growing and evolving fields such as user experience research, project management, and participatory design in Atlanta's booming media and technology industries.

The connections we have been able to forge this year are only the beginning of what we hope will be a broader development that brings local businesses and the humanities closer together. As much as there is a demand for the kinds of skills that humanities PhDs develop in their course of studies, we also recognize our role in creating a fruitful and productive relationship with the private sector and promoting how humanists can enrich the workplace.

**Confronting Culture:** The purpose of this Next Generation planning year has been to come up with solutions that we can actually implement. We have done so and look forward to the work ahead. Part of this process has been to avoid getting bogged down in some of the problems of our disciplines, the humanities, and the university that we are not going to fix through career services, curriculum tweaks, digital training, admissions policies, or internships. Those problems are there though, and they are directly connected to the crisis that the Next Gen program is addressing. In many ways, this process has been encouraging because we have made meaningful progress and have a path forward on a number of fronts. But the prolonged focus on the problems of humanities graduate education from the writing of the grant proposal to the writing of this white paper has also heightened our awareness of deeper difficulties and



our own implication in these systemic issues. While we are used to hearing how the structure of the university is not hospitable to new imaginings or implementations of career diversity, what we have largely failed to acknowledge to date are our own self-limiting blindspots.

Most of these issues are not surprising or new. Promotion and tenure pressure with its publish-or-perish paradigm encourages quantity over quality in our scholarship; it devalues teaching, service, and engagement with the public; it discourages interdisciplinary, collaborative, and digital work; and it isolates us from understanding careers outside of academia. To an extent, we all know this (or should). There are plenty of articles. We wring our hands at department meetings. But in the context of actively thinking for a year about the dilemma our grad students face upon graduation, these issues are particularly ugly. We can (and should and will) create internships, improve curricula, and reconsider admissions policies, but we also need to address how the professional structures of our disciplines directly affect the grad students we are training regardless of their career trajectory. Whether we mean to or not, our frustrations, fears, choices, and complacency affect their education and model what we do and do not value.

The planning process has prompted us to ask new questions about what it means to be humanities faculty and how and why these positions are structured the way they are. For example, why can't we go work for a few years outside of academia? From early in the process, we have been talking to alumni and friends working in technology, media, government, and nonprofit sectors. They have titles that include "digital storytelling" and "knowledge management." Many humanities faculty would be very good at these jobs, but it seems unimaginable that someone successful in a tenure-track job would leave for a few years and come back. The possible benefits are worth considering. Experience outside of academia would help us better advise our graduate and undergraduate students about career diversity. We could expand our network of internship opportunities and connections to advisors from non-academic sectors. We could bring humanities values to other sectors. Time away from the academy might reinvigorate our teaching and scholarship. We could make more money. Faculty from other disciplines do this. There are even models at our own institution of how we might structure this type of leave. Of course this is not for everyone. We would need to consider the implications for tenure, continued advisement of our grad students, and the disruption to course offerings. But much of what prevents this type of opportunity is a lack of imagination as opposed to absolute barriers. What other questions are we not asking?

Very little is going to be changed by heartfelt argument alone. Small steps that solve parts of the problems our grad students face will probably need to happen before we can wrap our heads around existential questions about our disciplines and the humanities. We can and will work with career services to develop resume workshops and figure out how to create MOUs so we can set up internships. We hope that as we implement some of these smaller changes, more faculty and grad students will think about what we value in our disciplines and the humanities.

**Student Innovation Fellowship:** The SIF program initially prompted us to apply for the Next Generation grant. It featured prominently in our proposal. Along with our focus on connecting with local businesses, it seemed of most interest to Jim Grossman, NEH reps, and other schools. SIF has been a major

component in our planning year, and we will continue to develop the program in ways that support our efforts to increase diverse career opportunities for our humanities grad students.

The SIF program was not initially created to increase opportunities for career diversity for humanities PhDs. The program was started to move funds that would normally go toward purchasing equipment toward staffing, put student tech fee funds back into students hands, and to provide support for faculty and departments who wanted to create digital research and teaching projects. In the three years of SIF, we have learned to better manage the program and to see the potential for meeting the needs of our grad and undergrad students from many disciplines. The Next Generation planning process has helped us see the potential for the program to fuel further innovation.

The SIF program provides funded positions for humanities grad students beyond more traditional roles in the classroom or as a research assistant, one of the main areas of focus from the NEH Next Generation CFP. While these more traditional positions remain an important and vital part of graduate education, the SIF program provides experiences beyond these roles, giving students the opportunities to develop skills that will help them succeed in or outside of academia. SIF grad students work on digital projects involving GIS, 3D modeling, VR/AR, data visualization, database development, and web design. The point is not for them to become experts in these areas, but to allow them to learn some basic technology skills, understand what is possible, and how to work with developers. Humanities graduate students have also taken on management roles. Over the past few years, we have learned the importance of having project and knowledge management positions on our larger projects, and with some self-directed training, humanities PhD students are ideal candidates. SIF projects are often public facing and involve transdisciplinary and interinstitutional collaboration, providing experiences outside the scope of more traditional humanities work. Most of our projects are online and we are working on best practices of documenting team members. SIF students can point to their participation on these projects, connected to the skills they list on their CVs or resumes.

For the first couple of years of the SIF program, we were largely unaware of models at other institutions. Part of this was that our program is different from others because of our funding, the number of disciplines involved, and that the program is based in the Library and Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. But much of our early isolation was because we were not in conversations with others trying to develop similar programs. This has changed over the past year. We are currently writing an article on the SIF program to be included in the *Debates in the Digital Humanities* volume on DH lab infrastructures. Along with Emory, Columbia, Brown, UCLA, and Penn State, we helped organize the day-long workshop, “Building Capacity with Care: Graduate Students and DH work in the Library,” at the international DH conference in Krakow in the summer of 2016. We are pro-actively looking at other models at other universities, and are currently in conversation with Emory and Georgia Tech about creating a skills badging consortium that all of our students could benefit from in the future. Sustained participation in these forums will help to stabilize, expand, and improve the program.

## SECTION IV. WHAT'S NEXT?

This past year has opened many conversations and started new programming that we believe will promote meaningful reform about career diversity and the role of humanities PhDs. Through our activities and events, we have come to understand that the skills necessary for success inside and outside of academia overlap more than we had initially believed. We are eager to continue the important work already in-progress, which was made possible by the NEH Planning Grant.

### **Follow through and expand what we have already started within our departments and at the university.**

- Implement expansion of Director of Graduate Studies role in English and History to focus on non-academic career preparation, networking events, and alumni tracking
- Connect more graduate students from other humanities departments to the Student Innovation Fellowship program
- Expand SIF professionalization model developed in the English department to other departments
- Continue discussions about graduate degree program reform, faculty education about career diversity, and GSU Humanities Graduate Student Interns initiative
- Continue participating in the AHA Career Diversity Initiative
- Secure USG accreditation for Digital Humanities Certificate
- Commence graduate internship with C.A.R.E.
- Commence SIF collaboration with SKIGNZ augmented reality
- **Continue building our network to create a stable internship model, form an advisory committee, and gain access to resources and consulting.**
  - Showcase events (such as our highly successful SIF Showcase in February 2017) that ignite exciting collaborations between local businesses and our graduate students
  - Present our work at non-academic conferences and local events, including venues we have already found success at such as the Maker's Fair by the City of Atlanta, VR Atlanta Day, Atlanta Studies Symposium, and SXSW
  - Expand network to include the vibrant Atlanta film, entertainment, and media industries
  - Forge connections with international companies and organizations, as we have done with C.A.R.E. and SKIGNZ, that have offices in the greater Atlanta area
  - Expand internship opportunities in number and scope
  - Highlight non-academic grant and funding opportunities for graduate students to seek, potentially in collaboration with local organizations
- **Strategize for long-term development and implementation.**
  - Create a stable, transferrable template for internships so that opportunities with local businesses and community organizations may be expeditiously seized
  - Define the structure of our Next Gen Humanities PhD team, including a clear articulation of the team members' roles that ensure comprehensive success
  - Document individual and team-based experiences for future recruitment and transparency of successful practices, i.e. an advisory document for usually-uncatalogued work that addresses such issues as the necessities of false starts, picking up loose threads, re-igniting projects, and reframing opportunities when building programming and relationships outside the academy
  - Seek additional grant opportunities from the Knight Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the NEH Next Gen Implementation grant

## APPENDIX

### 1. List of Participants for NEH Planning Grant

#### Core Committee

Brennan Collins, Associate Director, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (project director)  
 Denise Davidson, Director of Graduate Studies, Department of History (project co-director)  
 Dylan Ruediger, AHA Career Diversity Coordinator (project co-director)  
 Chris Kocela, Director of Graduate Studies, Department of English  
 Robin Wharton, Lecturer in English  
 Jeff Young, Lecturer in History  
 Carol Winkler, Associate Dean of College of Arts and Science  
 Amber Amari, Assistant Dean for Graduate Services, College of Arts and Sciences  
 Lisa Armistead, Associate Provost for Graduate Programs  
 Thomas Breideband, PhD Candidate in English  
 Laurissa Wolfram, GSU English PhD Alumni, Mailchimp  
 Mark Fleszar, GSU History PhD Alumni, Verizon Wireless  
 George Pullman, Professor of English  
 Ashley Cheyemi McNeil, PhD Candidate in English  
 Ness Creighton, PhD Candidate in History  
 Valerie Robin, GSU English PhD Alumni, SITA

#### Secondary Committee

Karyn Lu, CNN/HLN  
 Kallen Deck, UX Designer, Better Cloud  
 Carrie Heffner, MailChimp, GSU English MA  
 Christian Sager, HowStuffWorks  
 Joe Hurley, Data Service & GIS Librarian  
 Tim Merritt, Center for Instructional Innovation  
 Alan Pike, McKinsey Digital  
 Alex Cummings, Professor of History  
 Jeff Glover, Professor of Archaeology

#### Graduate Assistants

Leah Kleinberger  
 Megan Warley McDonald  
 Jacob Dent  
 Kateland Wolfe  
 Dionne Clark  
 Christine Anlicker

## 2. GSU Humanities Graduate Student Interns flyer (draft):

Advanced Soft  
Skills Training

# GSU Humanities Graduate Student Interns

As companies increasingly need to become more dynamic, interconnected and flexible, soft skills are critical.  
– Forbes

44 percent of executives [say] a lack of soft skills was the biggest proficiency gap they saw in the U.S. workforce.  
– HR Today



Humanities graduate students have the transferable skills to help you address the "soft skills gap" in your workforce. GSU graduate students are rigorously trained to solve complex research problems and to communicate and work effectively with people from a variety of backgrounds.

- research and problem solving
- professional communication
- self motivation and discipline
- project planning and design
- critical thinking
- attention to detail

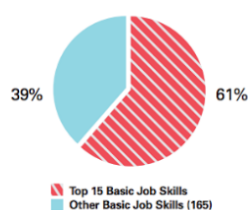
According to a recent study by the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, these are the high-demand skills Georgia employers have identified as essential.

### G. Skills in High Demand-Georgia

#### Most Demanded Baseline Skills

The top 15 basic job skills by job posting frequency are more highly demanded than the other 165 skills combined; soft skills are strongly represented as 9 of the top 15 basic job skills.

GA Basic Job Skills Distribution (2015 Job postings)



GA Top 15 Basic Job Skills (by Job postings frequency on 2015)

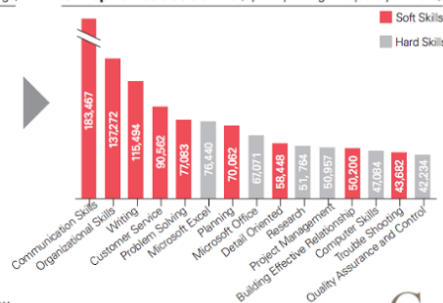


Figure G: Most In-demand Baseline Skills

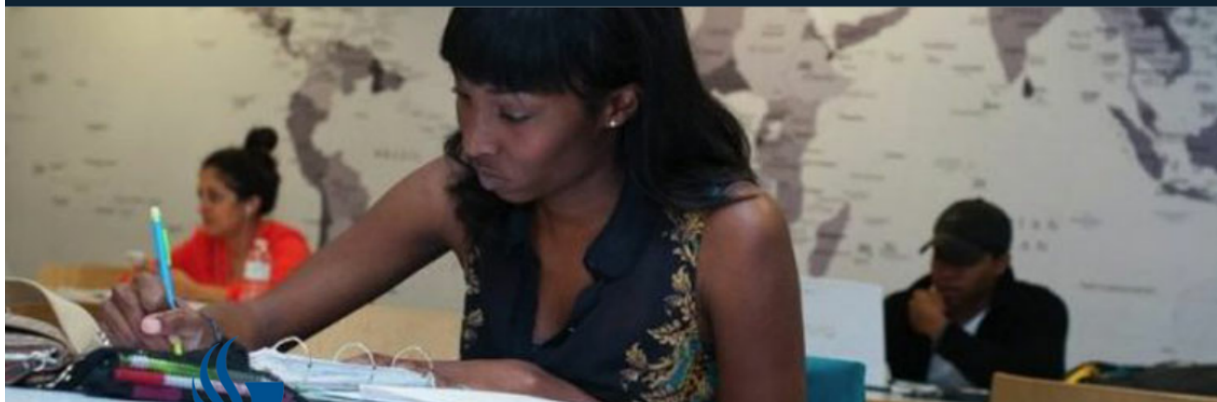
Building your workforce through technical expertise and experience alone is no longer sustainable. Soft skills promote resilience, teamwork, and long-term viability.

Researchers from the University of Michigan, Harvard University, and Boston College have recently found that workers trained in soft skills “were 12 percent more productive . . . [and] helped generate a whopping 256 percent net return on investment.”  
— Michigan News



Graduate students in our doctoral and master's programs often develop other valuable technical and professional expertise:

- Project management
- Program development
- Writing for specialist and non-specialist audiences
- Collaboration with colleagues of varying backgrounds and expertise
- Web design and product presentation
- Data visualization and analysis



For More Information. . .



**3. Student Innovation Fellowship projects and collaborations:** SIF projects are large-scale, digital, public-facing collaborations. The program provides humanities students with the space and resources to develop technical expertise and enhance their soft skills. Please find below a selection of completed and current projects:

- **[ATLMaps](#):** ATLmaps is a collaboration between Georgia State University and Emory University that combines archival maps, geospatial data visualization, and user contributed multimedia location pinpoints to promote investigation into any number of issues about Atlanta. The project demonstrates the power of stacking thousands of layers of information on one place, creating an innovative online platform that allows users to layer an increasing number of interdisciplinary data to address the complex issues that any city poses.
- **[3D Atlanta](#):** Georgia State University sits atop what was once the hub of Atlanta's African American red-light district, a rich assemblage of blues and rag-time clubs, and the old city jail. Today, Student Innovation Fellows are working to recreate this lost piece of Atlanta's history in an interactive, 3D environment. The resulting experience is an interactive game, accessed via Oculus Rifts, which will eventually provide an immersive, full scale model of Atlanta's history.
- **[Executive Approval Database](#):** The project is based on gathering approval data from polling agencies regarding Latin American political leaders. SIF fellows automated data collection practices and developed a browser-based platform enabling researchers to access and use the data for various research purposes. By automating most of the data collection, the goal is then to move beyond the Latin American context and look at other continents.
- **[Hoccleve Archive](#):** The Hoccleve Archive team is working to create a digital variorum/critical edition of the works of the Middle English poet, Thomas Hoccleve, especially his magnum opus, the many thousand line long Regiment of Princes, which survives in over 40 contemporary manuscripts.
- **Virtual Reality for the Visually Impaired:** This project focuses on establishing virtual reality gaming environments for the visually impaired community. SIF fellows are developing a virtual reality environment for the Oculus Rift that utilizes audible cues and gaming scripts, allowing users to experience virtual worlds without relying on sight.
- **Physics Active Learning:** This project instills TAs with the pedagogical and technological skills necessary to be transformational educators in undergraduate physics classrooms. The outcome of this work will provide a model for training teaching assistants in STEM disciplines as higher education moves increasingly toward the active learning model.

**4. Data Collection and Surveys:** The core committee conducted seven surveys of graduate faculty and students in the departments of History and English at GSU over the period of grant funding. These surveys were divided into three main groups: Group 1 attempted to gauge general attitudes about non-academic careers for doctoral students in the humanities prior to the majority of our grant-funded



initiatives; Group 2 measured the perceived value and effectiveness of two specific events and workshops organized as part of our grant initiatives; and Group 3 sought to assess student and faculty attitudes to non-academic career professionalization at the end of the funding period. All surveys consisted of ten questions and were conducted via SurveyMonkey.

### **Group 1 Survey Findings: General attitudes toward non-academic career preparation**

To assess general faculty and student attitudes toward non-academic career professionalization, we conducted two early surveys—one each for faculty and students at the start of the funding period.

Our first survey of graduate students, conducted between October 14 and October 25, 2016, was sent to 357 students and yielded 101 responses, for a response rate of 29%. Recipients were asked a variety of questions intended to gauge: their view of non-academic career paths; the extent to which current doctoral education at GSU encourages/meets the needs of students seeking such paths; and the types of changes needed to make doctoral education at GSU more conducive to non-academic career preparation.

The key observation to emerge from the first survey responses was that, while students displayed a strong interest in pursuing non-academic careers and felt that their faculty mentors were supportive of their career aspirations, the structure of humanities doctoral education at GSU is not particularly conducive to success in this area. For example, 80% of respondents indicated that they were equally if not more interested in non-academic careers than in academic careers after graduation; 85% of respondents indicated that humanities doctoral programs should play either a “substantial” or “major” role in preparing doctoral students; and 66% of respondents felt their individual faculty mentors were supportive of their career goals. Only 30% of respondents, however, characterized their current doctoral training as meeting their desire for professionalization toward non-academic career employment.

Discursive responses most frequently identified internships and workshops on non-academic professionalization as the best means of improving their doctoral education. One respondent writes that “[i]nternships are key to working toward a non-academic position”; a second observes that, “[i]nternships or fellowships that involve public organizations, NGO’s, community projects, etc. as part of the degree-seeking process would be ideal”; while a third writes that “I would love to see visitors, guest speakers and/or panels from the non-academic world at our school more often.”

Our first survey of graduate faculty, also conducted between October 14 and 25, 2016, was sent to 71 faculty members and yielded 32 responses, for a response rate of 45%. On several key metrics, the findings from this survey were very similar to those of our graduate student survey. For example, when asked if they would support doctoral students’ efforts to pursue non-academic careers, graduate faculty respondents answered affirmatively 71% of the time—a number that closely reflects the 66% of students who felt their faculty mentors would support such efforts. Likewise, faculty were in agreement with their students about the structure of humanities doctoral education at GSU: only 29% of faculty respondents felt that this structure was “conducive to the pursuit of non-academic careers.”

Again, discursive responses most frequently identified internships as the best way of professionalizing doctoral students toward non-academic career paths. In this vein one respondent speculates: “Programs that offer, or perhaps require, internships would give students a broader sense of what they can do with a terminal degree.” Another faculty member writes: “In the English department, the first step would be to create internships and service learning opportunities for course credit.” Several respondents also identified internships as a means of improving faculty mentoring. One representative of this view writes:



“A greater understanding among faculty of what humanities graduates can actually do in the private sector would help. For the most part, we literally don’t know. Forging relationships with businesses and nonprofits where students could intern would help too.”

These numbers and responses suggest that there is substantial unmet need—recognized by both faculty and students—for programmatic changes to doctoral education that would facilitate non-academic career professionalization and heighten awareness of the marketability of humanities skills and degrees beyond the traditional academic path.

### **Group 2 Survey Findings: Effectiveness of Grant-sponsored Initiatives**

In this group we conducted a total of three surveys. The first was sent to all humanities graduate students who attended our AHA Alumni Connections event on September 20, 2016; the last two were addressed separately to graduate student and faculty participants in our day-long Career Diversity workshop, led by Jim Grossman, on October 28, 2016. Based on the results of these surveys, these two grant-funded initiatives appear to have been successful in exposing attendees to the opportunities afforded by doctoral education in the humanities and in providing ideas and strategies for fostering changes to existing doctoral programs.

The survey of AHA Alumni Connections participants, conducted between September 21 and 26, 2016, was sent to 34 attendees and generated 17 responses, for a response rate of 50%. Of these respondents, 94% indicated that they were at least as interested in non-academic as academic career paths following graduation, and 71% either agreed or strongly agreed that “the advice and strategies provided by the alumni speakers can be usefully adapted to pursuing a broad variety of non-academic careers.” Significantly, 82% of respondents indicated that they would be more interested in pursuing non-academic careers if their department tracked and publicized job outcomes like those discussed by the alumni speakers.

The two surveys directed toward attendees of Jim Grossman’s Career Diversity workshop were conducted between November 14 and 21, 2016: of 32 graduate students, 6 (or 19%) responded; of 17 faculty attendees, 3 (or 18%) responded. Results of both surveys were very similar. For example, both faculty and graduate student respondents were unanimous in their view that their interest in non-academic careers either increased or remained consistent following the event; 100% of faculty and 83% of graduate student respondents indicated that, based on the data provided at the workshop, they either agreed or strongly agreed that “doctoral programs in the humanities should add courses specifically geared toward non-academic skills/knowledges.” Faculty and graduate student respondents also unanimously supported the idea of alternative funding models not tied to teaching.

### **Group 3 Survey Findings**

Our concluding surveys, both conducted between April 30 and May 8, 2017, were sent to the same lists of graduate students and faculty members as the first surveys. While response rates dropped significantly for these (11% for graduate students; 28% for faculty), they tended to reinforce earlier results. Graduate students and faculty who attended at least one of the grant-funded initiatives were unanimous in either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the workshops “provided advice and strategies that can be usefully adapted to pursuing a broad variety of non-academic careers”; likewise, these respondents were also unanimous in agreeing that the workshops “provided information relevant to changing the model for humanities doctoral programs at GSU.”

When asked to choose from among five strategies employable by humanities programs to help improve professionalization toward non-academic careers (faculty mentorship, workshops, internships,

restructuring of dissertation formats, and degree concentrations focusing on non-academic professionalization), faculty and graduate students both chose “regular advising and workshops” and “internships” more frequently than any other options. For faculty, the least-selected option was “degree concentrations,” while for graduate students, “restructuring of dissertations” was the least popular option.

These results suggest that, following our grant-funded initiatives, the value of regular workshops and internships has been recognized by humanities faculty and graduate students as particularly effective strategies for broadening employment outcomes among humanities Ph.D.s.